

Braco and Greenloaning

Community Action Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE & STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

MAY 2023



Funding for the preparation of the Community Action Plan has been provided by Local Energy Scotland, Perth & Kinross Council and Ardoch Development Trust. The work is also being supported by Ardoch Development Trust.



CONTENTS

	pages
1. Location	4
2. Population	6
3. Housing	8
4. Economy	10
5. Education	14
6. Health and Care	17
7. Community facilities, groups, and activities	19
8. Environment	23
9. Heritage	26
10. Roads and transport	28
11. Utilities	30

Note on sources of Information and Views

Stakeholder Conversations

This report includes information and views provided through a series of *Stakeholder Conversations* carried out to inform the preparation of the Braco and Greenloaning Community Action Plan.

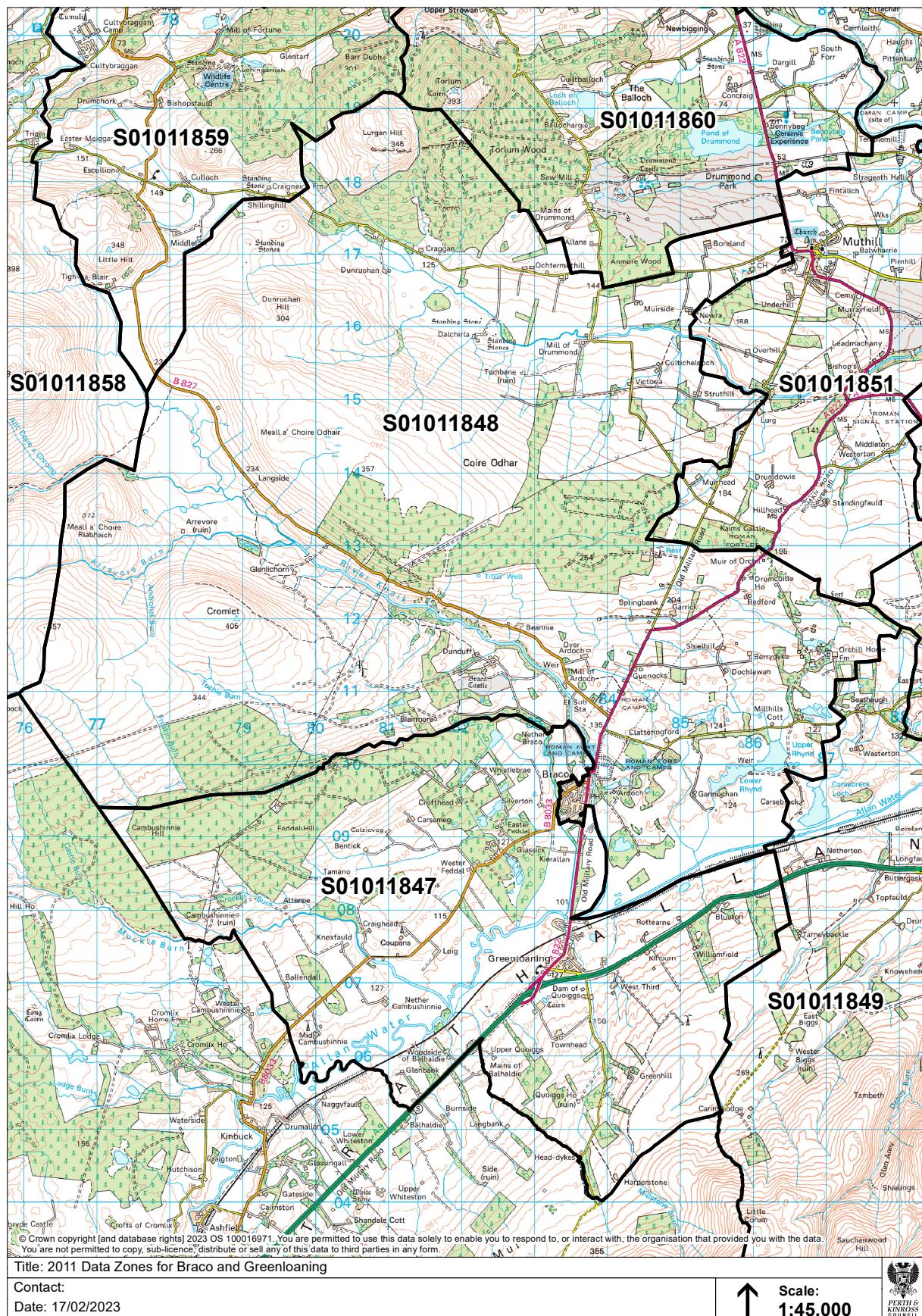
Views and information were provided by representatives from: Ardoch Development Trust, Ardoch in Bloom, Ardoch Parish Church, Ardoch Strings, Ardoch Juniors, Ardoch and Blackford Estates, Ardoch Amateur Dramatics, Braco and Greenloaning Community Council, Braco Primary School, Braco Primary School Parent Council, Braco Village Hall, Braco Show, Braco Castle Farms, Braco Coffee Shop, Feddal Farm and from other local groups and organisations including the Hot Chocolate Club, Pins and Needles, Beer Festival, Guild, and Rural Institute.

Profile

Information about the community is also based on desk research to gather existing statistics and information about the community.

The desk research draws on area statistics that are available for 'data zones' across Scotland. The 'best fit' ones for Braco and Greenloaning are SO1011848 and SO11847 as shown in the map below.

We were able to use the Community Insight Software, made available through Perth and Kinross Council, to obtain some of the profile information for these data zones. The software provides as up to date statistics as are available from a range of sources.



1. LOCATION

Braco and Greenloaning are two small adjacent villages in Perthshire. They are located just off the A9 on the A822 road to Crieff, approximately 6 miles from Dunblane and 8 miles from Crieff.

Braco and Greenloaning is a Community Council area within the Strathallan Ward of Perth and Kinross Council and is bounded by Stirling Council to the south.

The villages are set between the River Knaik and the Keir Burn, and the Allan Water flows past Greenloaning. The villages are surrounded by farmland and three estates – Ardoch Estate, Blackford Estate and Braco Castle Farms.

Stakeholder views and information

On the edge!

Being on the boundary with Stirling Council and on the edge of Perth and Kinross has many advantages but it also means that people access services in different places. For example, secondary school pupils attend different schools in either Crieff, Auchterarder or Dunblane.

Close to the A9

One of the main attractions for many people is being so close to the A9 for commuting and for accessing services and amenities. The area's convenient location for commuting undoubtedly led to its growth in the past - with four housing estates being built in Braco in the 1970s and further significant housing development in Greenloaning in the late 1990s.

'Semi – rural'

The area's location means that people benefit from closeness to larger towns and cities but are also living 'close to nature' in beautiful countryside with farms, estates, woodlands, and rivers. This semi-rural aspect of their location was often commented on as a strong positive.

Once upon a time - on the railway line

The main north south railway line also passes through the community at Greenloaning. The Greenloaning station closed in 1956 and the nearest stations are now at Gleneagles or Dunblane. Some stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see the station opened again.

On the Pitlochry Tourist Route

The A822 road is signed as the tourist route to Pitlochry. Braco and Greenloaning is the first-place on that route for motorists travelling coming from the South. Stakeholders thought that more could be made of this aspect of the area's location.

Heritage

The location is also notable for having been at the far reaches of the Roman Empire in the UK. The remains of the Roman Fort at Ardoch still bear witness to this as do other nearby Roman towers and signaling stations such as the one at Grinnan Hill. The Fort is a national scheduled monument.

2. POPULATION

Total population

The population of the two data zones that correspond closely to the Community Council area was estimated at 1,195 in 2020.

Total Population	Aged 0-15	Working age population	Aged 65+	Dependency ratio
1,195	158	736	301	0.62
49.5% male; 50.5% female	13.2%	61.6%	25.2%	

Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2020

Note: The dependency ratio is the ratio of non-working to working age population.

Comparison of age profile with Perth and Kinross, and Scotland

Age	Braco and Greenloaning	Braco and Greenloaning	Perth and Kinross %	Scotland %
Under 16	158	13.2%	16%	18%
16 – 65	736	61.6%	60.1%	64%
65 and over	301	25.2%	23.9%	19%

Source: National Records of Scotland Estimated Population SIMD 2020

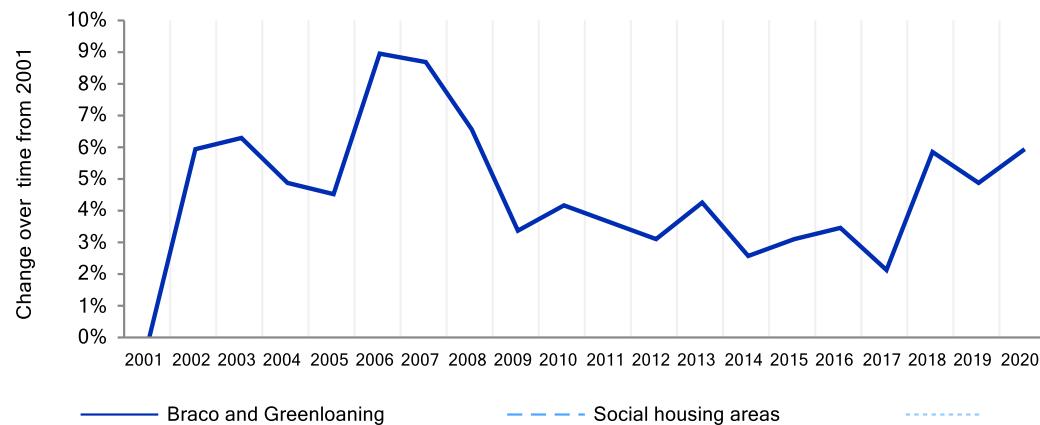
- The most noticeable difference in the age profile of the Braco and Greenloaning population compared to Perth and Kinross and Scotland is the lower percentage of under 16's.
- There is also a slightly higher percentage of over 65's than Perth and Kinross and significantly higher than that for Scotland.
- it has a slightly higher percentage of working age population than Perth and Kinross though one that is lower than for Scotland.

Changes in Population

The chart below shows that over the last twenty years the population has grown - with a peak in 2006 which then declined until 2017 before increasing again. Taken overall the population has grown by around 6% since 2001. This compares to a population increase of 12% for Perth and Kinross.

Figure: % change in population

Source: Mid-year estimates: Office of National Statistics (ONS)



Stakeholder Views

Population growth 'in waves'

Stakeholders noted that the growth of population over the last 50 or so years was 'in waves' and linked to the development of housing estates – initially in Braco in the 1970's and then in the late 90's in Greenloaning. It's interesting to note from the charts above that that 'wave' pattern seems to still be detectable over the last 20 years. The similar population growth tables for Perth and Kinross show a much more even steady growth!

Slower population growth than for Perth and Kinross

The slower population growth for Braco and Greenloaning compared with Perth and Kinross was attributed by some stakeholders to the limits placed on growth by the sewage treatment works being at capacity for both Braco and Greenloaning.

Older population

The older population of the community was thought in part to be linked to the growth of the community in the 1970s and 1990s with the young people who arrived then – now having stayed and become older! Other likely factors were thought to include things that might dissuade younger people and families – lack of proximity to a secondary school, lack of starter homes, few immediate shops and services, and need for reliance on cars.

A bigger population?

Some stakeholders thought it would be good if the population did grow further in the future to help sustain needed local shops and services like the school. Others were content with the community not growing much in the future – remarking that they had been attracted to Braco and Greenloaning by its small rural community feel.

Strategic Issues and key points

Slower growth in population than for Perth and Kinross

Lower percentage of under 16's, higher percentage of working age and over 65's compared to Perth and Kinross and Scotland

Older population than for Perth and Kinross and Scotland.

Infrastructure limits on future growth and mixed views on whether growth is desirable.

3. HOUSING

Total number of houses and housing tenure

The records for the 2011 Census for the best fit data zones indicate a total occupied housing stock of 483 households with the following tenure:

Owner occupied	Owner-occupied: owned outright	Owner-occupied owned: with mortgage or loan
381 79%	211 #N/A	170 #N/A
Owner-occupied: shared ownership	Social rented households	Rented from Council
00 #N/A	32 6.6%	25 #N/A
Rented from Housing Association or Social Landlord	Rented from private landlord or letting agency	Other rented dwellings
07 #N/A	44 9%	26 5.4%

Source: Census 2011

Note: 'other rented' includes employer of a household member and relative or friend of a household member and living rent free.

In addition, there were 26 houses noted as 'vacant' at the time of the 2011 census.

Comparison of Tenure with Perth & Kinross and Scotland

There is a relatively high level of owner occupation and low levels of social housing in Braco and Greenloaning compared to regional and national figures.

Tenure	Braco and Greenloaning %	Perth and Kinross %	Scotland %
Owner Occupied	79%	66%	62%
Social Rented	6.6%	17%	24%
Private Rented	9%	13%	11%
Other (incl. rent free)	5.4%	4%	2%

Source: Census 2011

House Prices and affordability

Properties are grouped into Council Tax Bands based on the relative value of the property e.g. properties in bands A, B or C are lower priced housing while properties in bands F, G and H are higher priced properties. So, in broad terms, areas with a high proportion of properties in band A are more likely to have more affordable housing while areas with a high proportion in F-G have more expensive housing.

Council Tax band A dwellings	Council Tax band B dwellings	Council Tax band C dwellings	Council Tax band D dwellings
14	59	50	67
2.6%	11.1%	9.4%	12.6%
Council Tax band E dwellings	Council Tax band F dwellings	Council Tax band G dwellings	Council Tax band H dwellings
91	155	91	6
17.1%	29.1%	17.1%	1.1%

Source: National Records of Scotland, 2018

The data suggests that Braco and Greenloaning has a relative high proportion of houses in bands F-G than they do of houses in lower priced housing.

Stakeholder views and information

Constraints on housing development

It was noted that further development of housing was constrained by the current sewage treatment plants for both Braco and Greenloaning which are at capacity. As mentioned, it was acknowledged that this constraint might in part explain the slower growth in the population than as for Perth and Kinross as a whole.

Potential sites

- People mentioned a site near the A9 in Greenloaning that had been up for sale, and which was thought to be back on the market again. However, people questioned its suitability for housing.
- Some of the fields between Braco and Greenloaning were also thought to be potential sites for development – it was noted that some fields to the south of the Crieff Road are owned by a builder from Auchterarder.
- A recent planning application for 6 houses near Feddal Castle had been made recently but is understood to have been withdrawn following a range of community concerns about the site's suitability.
- Some suggested that Greenloaning Primary School could also be suitable for housing but other ideas for its future use were also made.

Affordability

Despite the suggested lack of affordable housing based on council tax band analysis some stakeholders thought that housing in Braco and Greenloaning was nonetheless relatively affordable compared to many neighbouring communities – and saw that as a positive feature of the community.

Main headlines

High levels of owner occupancy and low levels of social housing compared to Perth and Kinross and Scotland

Statistics suggest lack of affordable accommodation, but some stakeholders still thought housing was comparatively more affordable than in other communities nearby

Constraints on housing development – and a link to slower growth in local population

Sites that could offer the potential for growth in the future

4. EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

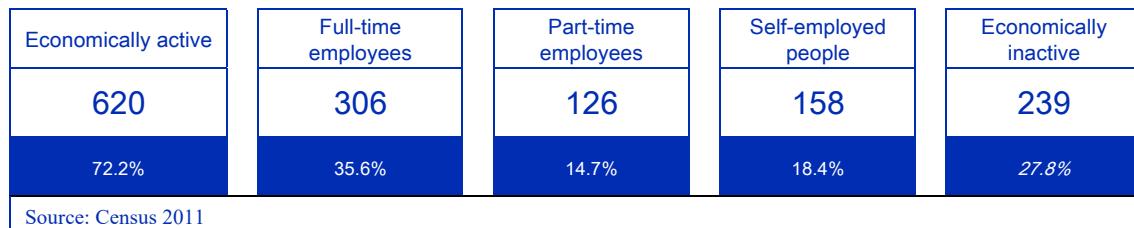
Economic Activity

Economic activity in Braco and Greenloaning is broadly similar to that of Perth and Kinross – but with a significantly higher percentage of self-employed people and lower percentage of full-time employees.

	Braco and Greenloaning	Perth and Kinross
Economically Active	72%	71%
Full Time Employees	35.6%	40.1%
Part Time Employees	14.7%	14.3%
Self Employed People	18.4%	10.6%
Economically Inactive	28%	29%

Source: Census 2011

Braco and Greenloaning – numbers of economically active



Employment by sector

The table below shows the three main sectors of employment for Braco and Greenloaning residents.

Largest employment sector	Second largest employment sector	Third largest employment sector
Health & social work	Retail	Education
77 employees (13% of 606 of people in employment)	64 employees (11% of 606 of people in employment)	61 employees (10% of 606 of people in employment)

This table shows the main types of occupations residents have.

Managerial occupations	Professional (or associate) occupations	Administrative or secretarial occupations	Skilled trades occupations	Elementary occupations
73	232	60	78	52
#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A

Source: Census 2011

Businesses in Braco and Greenloaning

The table below shows the different types of businesses operating in/from Braco and Greenloaning. It shows that there is a high percentage of businesses engaged in the Primary Sector. Construction; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Wholesale, retail and repairs; Transport and storage and information and communication sectors make up the bulk of the rest of businesses in the area.

Table: Business sites by sector

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2017

Business categories	Braco & Greenloaning %
Administrative and support service activities	5
Education, human health and social work activities	1
Arts, entertainment and recreation and other service activities	1
Primary Industries	30
Manufacturing	1
Construction	12
Wholesale, retail and repairs	10
Transport and storage and Information and communication	9
Accommodation and food service activities	1
Financial and Insurance and Real estate activities	0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	12

Stakeholder views

Local importance of the primary sector

As shown in the tables above there are around 30 businesses in the area involved in farming, forestry, field sports and other land-based activities. Local farms and estates will still be the most significant employers in the area with a mix of direct employment, hiring of contractors, and seasonal work (e.g., beaters for shooting).

'We employ 10 people directly, hire 20 beaters for shooting, and take on 30 seasonal staff at Christmas'

Working together with landmanagers

It was recognised throughout this consultation and by all parties that there was a need for a closer and better relationship between the community and local landmanagers. Ideas and improvements to make more of the local environment and heritage including ways that benefits the local economy are thought likely to benefit from partnership working and dialogue.

Shop and Local Services

Stakeholders highlighted the high value they place on still having the local shop. The shop and shopkeepers were often cited as a great asset to the community. It was noted that they had played an important role in deliveries to local people during the covid

pandemic. They also provide a useful Prescription Collection Service as part of the NHS's Chronic Medical Service (CMS).

Although the Post Office is no longer – it was still appreciated that there was a mobile service operating twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

Coffee Shop and Hotel

The Coffee Shop is recognised as a great asset to the community. It opened in 2018 and has given the community a meeting place as well as a place for people to stop on their way through Braco. People also mentioned that they had enjoyed the period when the café had extended hours and was serving evening meals.

The Braco Hotel has been closed for around 12 years. It was bought almost 9 years ago with a view to it being refurbished and being opened again as a pub/restaurant. It is understood that initial plans were to have it opened in 2020 if it hadn't been for the small matter of the pandemic. It is still hugely hoped by all concerned that the pub/restaurant will open. It is one of the most desired developments for the future of the community. The lack of an informal social meeting place was sorely felt by many.

Commuting and working from home

It is recognised that many people commute out of the area to work – and that Braco and Greenloaning is an ideal location for commuters to Perth and Stirling as well as further afield.

With increasing numbers of people working from home since Covid as well as commuting it was noted by some that broadband was good and by others that it could be better! It may be based on this that there is patchy provision throughout the area (?) – and a need to continue to lobby for better broadband.

There were several suggestions made that the 'mothballed' Greenloaning School could be used to create small office spaces 'a bit like Can Do in Crieff'.

Childcare

Lack of local childcare was also mentioned as a problem that affected peoples' work/life patterns and could be a limiting factor in terms of employment opportunities. Lack of childcare might partly explain the relatively high number of people working part time. Several stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see a greater availability of childcare options locally.

Making Braco more welcoming - the visitor economy

There was a feeling that Braco and Greenloaning could be doing more to encourage people to stop and enjoy the area and in so doing support the viability of local businesses like the coffee shop, the proposed hotel/pub, and potentially create other economic opportunities.

In this context people mentioned:

- Needed improvements to some of the built environment including improvements to Front Street appearance and lay out as well as to empty buildings.
- Continued environmental improvements and the great work of Ardoch in Bloom
- Making more of the local walks and cycle routes
- Making more of the Roman Fort and other local heritage
- Promoting other assets e.g., Braco Castle Gardens
- Improved parking, signage, information and interpretation

'must be more appealing'.

Main headlines

Importance of land-based businesses in the local economy and the potential benefits of close cooperation between community and land managers

The great location for commuting

The importance of the local shop, coffee shop and local (mobile) services

The strong desire to see the Pub/Hotel opened again

The need and opportunities to make the area more attractive as a place to stop, visit and enjoy

The need to provide facilities and services to support employment e.g., childcare, office/workspace, good broadband.

5. EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

Nursery and Primary Education

Braco Primary School has 3 primary classes and a nursery. This academic year, 2022 -2023, there are 53 pupils in the school and 8 in the nursery.

Greenloaning Primary School is currently closed and 'mothballed' pending a final decision on the plans for proposed new school for Braco.

A new Primary School has been discussed and planned for over the last 10 years. The latest plan (Plan A!) for the new school would see it located in the field behind the Village Hall and the Play Area. It is understood that the sale of the land for the development is currently under negotiation.

Secondary Schools

Most secondary school pupils in the area go to either Crieff, Auchterarder or Dunblane High Schools.

Stakeholder views and information

Positive views of the Primary School

The primary school is very highly regarded in the community with great teachers and staff and a strong Parent Council. It was cited as a reason for wanting to live in the community. It not only provided great education but a safe, warm, welcoming and nurturing environment and experience.

Shortage of space

The only limitation to the school experience is the existing space. The nursery and primary school building is recognised by all concerned (including the education authority) as too small. Nursery Space is very limited and there is a lack of changing facilities – and space also prevents the school from being as inclusive as it would wish to be.

Use of the Village Hall

The school uses the Village Hall for PE, Assemblies, lunches and other whole school activities and events. Perth and Kinross Council pay for this use of the hall during the day and the hall is available for hire to the community out of school hours. PKC also pay for the halls heating and lighting and carry out improvements (e.g., recent improvement of the toilets).

School use of the Hall does come with some drawbacks. In addition to the obvious one of the lack of availability of the hall during school hours for community use, there are other concerns. The Hall for example is fairly congested by chairs (hall chairs and school chairs) and a lack of storage space means that this makes its use for some activities more difficult.

Added value and activities at the Primary School

It is noted and much appreciated that the school has been able - with funding from ADT and through the work of the Parent Council - to have resources and tuition that would not normally be available to such a small school. There are as many as 22 children taking violin lessons as part of the school day – and around 15 of these also attend the Ardoch Strings after school club. Ardoch Juniors has also been established by a local young woman to provide football lessons to girls (and some boys!) during the school week and at weekends. Other additional activities being supported include the Forest School and school trips.

In addition to the playground, primary school children also have the wonderful opportunity of using the play park at the back of the village hall.

Roll at Braco Primary School is less than it could be – need for childcare

It was noted that despite its great reputation, enhanced resources and activities that not all children of primary school age attend Braco Primary School. It was thought that as many as 1/3 of children go to schooling elsewhere. It was thought that this could partly be due to the lack of locally available childcare. It may also be in part attributed to concerns about the schools limited space.

By comparison Dunblane Primary has 'wrap around childcare'. The primary school has a teacher in attendance before the start of school to welcome pupils, but they are currently unable to offer more formal before school care.

Travel to School

Many children walk or cycle to school though and Sustrans helped fund a bike shelter for the school. The nursery and school both run cycling proficiency activities. It was pointed out though that it was more difficult for children from Greenloaning to access the school. Apart from the distance the pavement is too narrow, and cars move too fast. There was a desire to see an all abilities off road path developed from Greenloaning to Braco as a safe route to school.

Plans for the New School

The proposed new school has been in the discussion/planning stage for several years now and has led to some 'planning blight' with some improvements not being made (e.g., more storage space in the Village Hall).

Most recent plans for the new school now include proposals for a hall within the school – which has not always been the case in previous plans. It is understood that currently negotiations are underway for PKC to purchase the proposed preferred school site in Lodge Park.

Many stakeholders hoped that the land purchased would create the potential to develop a car park that could be used not just for the school but for the wider community and remedy what is seen as a car parking problem in Braco and for the surrounding community facilities (Church and Village Hall).

Different secondary schools and creating local opportunities to get together

It was mentioned that groups like the Hot Chocolate Club and the Violin Club for teenagers were providing a great way of bringing secondary school children together in the community.

Main headlines

*Great appreciation of the quality of Braco Primary School in the heart of the community
Value of additional tuition in school and after school clubs – and fundraising role of Parent Council and ADT*

Recognition of the primary school building being too small and not fit for purpose

Use of the Village Hall – which has pros and cons

Plans for the new Primary School – length of time, some ‘planning blight’, agreeing final design and site

Impact of proposed new school on future of village hall

Need to support use of primary school by providing e.g. childcare and safe routes to school

Value of activities which bring secondary school pupils together in the community

6. HEALTH AND CARE

Health and Care Services

- Nearest GP surgeries in Crieff, Dunblane and Auchterarder
- Hospital & Acute Services in Perth, Dundee and Larbert – there is also a Cottage Hospital and minor injuries unit at Crieff.
- Pharmacies in Crieff, Dunblane, prescription service offered by Village Shop
- Nearest care home or sheltered homes in Muthill, Crieff, Dunblane
- Care workers and services based in the wider area provide private home care services
- Church Outreach Services – pastoral care includes visits for housebound

Emergency Services

Auchterarder and Crieff Police Station

- Ambulance at Stirling or Perth
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Dunblane, Bridge of Allan, Auchterarder
- First Response?
- Defibrillators located in the community at the Braco Village Hall and in Greenloaning

Stakeholder views

Befriending and early referral service

Mindful of the good work of the church outreach team it was further suggested that even more could be done to offer a befriending/early warning/referral service to the vulnerable in the community.

'Like to do more for the housebound and socially isolated'

'We could have a handy man/helping hands service or help with garden maintenance for the elderly'

GP appointments

One or two stakeholders noted that the waiting time had become increasingly long for GP appointments at both Crieff and Dunblane.

Shop – Pharmacy Prescription Service

This was mentioned as a very useful local service

Potential benefits of a community minibus

Improved access to health services was thought to be one of the potential benefits that could stem from the community having its own minibus.

Main headlines

Improving access to health services – GP appointments/community minibus

Good work of the Church and its community outreach service

Potential to do more for the vulnerable in the community

7. COMMUNITY AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND GROUPS

Community Facilities

- Braco Village Hall
- Ardoch Parish Church and Church Hall

Recreation Facilities

- Playpark on Feddal Road, Braco
- Playpark on Millhill Drive, Greenloaning
- MUGA behind Village Hall for Tennis, 5 a side football, basketball, netball
- The Lodge Park, home to the annual Braco Show
- Braco Bowling Club

Community Groups

- Braco and Greenloaning Community Council
- Ardoch Development Trust
- Braco Village Hall Committee
- Ardoch MUGA committee?
- Ardoch in Bloom
- Friends of the Cemeteries Group
- Ardoch Agricultural Society (Braco Show)
- Beer Festival Committee
- Church Community Outreach Team, Youth Team, IT Team
- Parent and Toddler Group (currently not running since Covid)

Recreation, Arts and Culture Groups

- Church Hub – Warm Space Hub
- Young People - Hot Chocolate Club, Forest Mission, Holiday Club, Ardoch Strings, Ardoch Juniors
- Drama and Music - Ardoch Amateur Dramatic Society, Scottish Country Dancing, Church Choir, Singing Group, Greenloaning Burns Club
- Crafts Groups - Pins and Needles, Ardoch Quilters, Braco Art Class
- IT Classes in Church
- Rural Institute, Women's Guild
- Messy Church

Events

- Braco Show
- Beer Festival
- Daffodil Teas
- Community Lunches (Nov-March)
- Church Potluck Suppers, Whist Drive, Afternoon Teas, Bake Off
- Annual Duck Race
- Santa Dash and Christmas Fair

Stakeholder Views

The role and future of the Hall

Points and issues raised included:

- Its current use and value for a range of community meetings, activities and events
- Its financial stability due to funding from PKC for school use and what would happen if that use was lost
- Restrictions in community use due to school use (e.g., '*there is a lack of wet weather indoor sports facilities as the hall is not suitable*')
- The ongoing need for more storage (e.g., to cope with all the chairs!)
- Difficulties in carrying out renovations/extensions (including storage) due to changing plans for the new school
- The improvements and upgrades that have been made (e.g., toilets) and other areas that are in need of upgrading (e.g., kitchen)
- The future use and options for the hall now proposals for the new school include a dining/sports hall
- Future ownership options – including community buy out.

The Role and Future of the Church

The Church is recognised as playing a very significant role in the community. Its outreach team help organize monthly community lunches, helped develop the 'Church Hub' as a warm space, undertake 'pastoral care', provide help for the needy, and raise funds for the Auchterarder Food Bank. The Church also organize activities for young people – for very young the Forest Mission and for older children (between P7 and S2) the Hot Chocolate Club. The Hot Chocolate Club is seen as valuable in providing children who go to different secondary schools with a place to meet together in the community.

The Church Hall is a very welcoming space and is used by many groups and activities including those set up by the Church.

The future of the church is however uncertain. There is an ongoing review of Ardoch, Blackford and Muthill Churches considering options of 'closure' or 'union' of the exiting churches. It is understood that the final decision has recently been delayed for up to two years.

Those championing the future of the Ardoch Church would like to see it developed further as a '*multipurpose building for the whole community*' with more space for community meetings and activities, a community café and improved IT facilities.

'Church could be more of a community centre with the pews out of church to create a larger space for community use'

Overall state of flux and joint planning for the future

There is a lot to consider about the future of the primary schools, village hall and church. Within this uncertainty there are seen also to be opportunities to consider how these facilities and organisations at the heart of Braco and community life can best work

together with the potential for some creative development that would benefit the community.

It's seen as important that these are considered in the round and for the benefit of the community as a whole and not just singly and separately. Suggestions as 'for examples' was that there could be a 'community district heating system for the Village Hall, School and Church' and car parking space as part of the new school that would also benefit the hall, church and village.

Improving play and outdoor recreation facilities

ADT have helped to fund a great play area and multi-use games area in the park at the back of the village hall. The area is extremely well used and well appreciated. Several improvements and developments were suggested:

- more play equipment for older children (from P4 upwards) as the play facilities are currently geared to younger age groups. Ideas mentioned included swings suitable for older children, monkey bars, and a climbing frame
- Lighting for the MUGA so it could be used more in the evening and in winter
- The development of the grass pitch to improve the playing surface
- A shelter that could be used by young people, for changing at the MUGA, and for parents with children at the play area
- a skatepark/bike park

It was also suggested that the play park at Greenloaning could be improved to make more use of the large space.

Supporting events

Events were put on ice during Covid and when they re-emerged it was to find that there was a strong local appetite to come out and enjoy again. As a consequence, the Braco Show has increased participation from the wider community and the Beer Festival is back with a bang!

Activities for children and young people

Parents and Toddlers Group – not restarted since Covid - was often mentioned as a loss and something that people hoped would start up again. It was suggested that it would be good to have a Youth Club in addition to the Hot Chocolate Club.

Community Resilience

There is a move to establish a Community Resilience Group that would develop plans and resources in case of floods or power cuts etc.

Community Mini-Bus

There was some desire for Braco and Greenloaning to have its own Community Minibus to improve access to services and amenities in nearby larger villages and towns. Comrie was cited as an example of a community that benefited from having its own community transport.

'It would help reduce isolation, could be for the school, shopping trips, hospital, leisure, outings.'

Community information and communication

There was a feeling that it would be good to have a coordinated calendar of local events and activities and good ways of booking use of facilities (Hall, MUGA)

While people appreciated the range of information available through different facebook pages and websites it was felt too that there might be value in creating a main Braco and Greenloaning website.

Role of ADT

It was noticeable how often people referred to the benefit of ADT providing grants for projects, activities and facilities that have benefited the community. There was a strong sense that they had made a real positive benefit to the community. It was clear too that ADT had not only just reacted to grant applications but had been proactive in the development of a range of projects.

ADT themselves noted that they were often limited by what they can do by the lack of access to land and property in community ownership.

The development of this Community Action Plan might see a growing role for ADT in coordinating and supporting the priority projects identified within it.

Main headlines

Future of the Village Hall in light of plans for a new school

Future of the Church now under review and the valuable role of the Church in the community now

Opportunities for the development of the school, hall and church to be thought of 'in the round'

Need to improve, develop play and outdoor recreation facilities

Possible development of other community groups/activities/projects – rekindle Toddlers, Youth Club, Community Resilience Group, Community Minibus

Improve and rationalise communication and information

The role and future potential for a growing role for ADT?

8. ENVIRONMENT

Land Use

The area includes not only the two villages, but the surrounding countryside managed by working farms and estates. Farming is mainly sheep and cattle and grassland, with only some arable farming on Blackford Estate. This represents a shift over the last 25 years when there was more extensive arable farming of crops. Forestry land use in the area ranges from amenity woodland and estate trees to more commercial planting (including the Christmas Trees). The estates also use land for field sports.

Use of land for renewable energy projects is on the increase with the Greenscares Windfarm now in development and planning applications being submitted for battery storage 'farms'. The potential for micro hydro and solar arrays has also been explored.

Rivers, Burns and Ponds

The area is enhanced by its rivers and burns - the River Allan, River Knaik, Keir Burn, Mill Burn and Feddal Burn. There are also ponds on the estates and surrounding farmland – some related to old Mills, some developed for field sports shooting, and some simply for enjoyment and wildlife as part of the landscape amenity.

The Forth River Trust is currently working with local landowners near Greenloaning to slow the flow of the Allan Water and develop new ponds and scrapes to boost wetland habitat and provide natural flood management benefits by storing water on the floodplain. Braco Castle Farms had also at one time proposed developing ponds as part of upper river catchment water management to reduce flooding risk from the River Allan.

Countryside Access

There was noticeable appreciation of all the greenspaces, parks, woods, rivers and wildlife.

There are several great local walks and cycle routes in the area some of which are designated as core paths. Paths mentioned by stakeholders included:

Mill Path, Path to Gleneagles Road, 'The Snuff', Castle Tracks, Windmills, Cromlet, Doune Windmills (Cycle Route), Grinnan Hill, Keirallan - Feddal Road Path, River Allan Path, River Knaik Path.

Braco Castle Gardens has several woodland walks, as well as amenity ponds and a designed landscaped garden which is open to the public from May - October.

Stakeholder Views

Ardoch in Bloom

There was much praise for the work of Ardoch in Bloom from the crocuses in Braco to the daffodils between Greenloaning and Braco, the tree planting at the New Cemetery, the Keir Burn Picnic area, the restoration of the Boundary Walls, the planters in Braco and Greenloaning and their continued programme of environmental improvements in general.

'there are bulbs in Spring, plants in summer and wallflowers in winter'

'There are 30 planters in Braco, fifteen in Greenloaning'

'Tree planting in Lodge Park, New Cemetery'

'The great Keir Picnic Site'

The work was seen as vital in making Braco and Greenloaning an attractive place for locals and visitors and in maintaining and restoring landscape features such as the walls. Their impact is therefore recognised as not only contributing to the environment but to peoples wellbeing and potentially to the local economy.

Community Allotments and Orchard

Many people would like to see the development of community gardens with allotment space, orchards and even polytunnels for Ardoch in Bloom. Two suggestions were made for possible locations – in the fields near the Keir Burn Picnic area, between Gentlecroft and the New Cemetery.

It was also noted that Ardoch in Bloom was in real need of storage space.

Maintaining the existing walking network

People were delighted that there were some many good walks around the area. They thought that there was a need to keep maintaining and improving them. Particular mention was made of routes down from Grinnan Hill, the River Knaik Path and the path from Keirallan to Feddal Road.

Developing new paths

The main suggestions for new paths focused on the need for 'functional paths' for local people:

- a Greenloaning – Braco off road path – parallel to the road. An all-abilities path suitable for parents with pushchairs, school kids with bikes, and wheelchair users. This was seen as vital in providing safe routes to school, and in general offering people in Greenloaning the possibility of car free access to the shop, coffee shop (and hopefully the pub!), village hall, church, and recreational areas in Braco.
- An extension to the pavement along Feddal Road out from the village to the Keir Burn Picnic area. This would allow safe access out to this lovely spot.

Cycle network

There was also seen to be an opportunity to make more of Braco and Greenloaning's location at the hub of an extensive cycle network for both on and off-road cycling. This might involve raising awareness of what was already available but also looking at ways of extending the network and supporting links to other local and national cycle routes.

Paths and Access – some land use conflict

Landowners were concerned about several issues

- Dogs not on leashes
- Conflict with shooting and lambing seasons
- People 'wandering' off paths onto private land

- One or two incidents of vandalism to property

Walkers and recreational users were concerned about:

- Being discouraged from walking through Ardoch Estate
- The uncertainty of walking around Grinnan Hill now some of it was in private ownership
- The removal of a core path map that had been erected at the entrance to Lodge Park.

Local Paths Group

It was recognised that one local man had taken the lead in maintaining many of the paths and that there was perhaps now a need for a local paths group to support this work. It could maintain existing paths, help develop new ones and be actively involved in promoting their use.

Recycling and Rubbish Bins

Stakeholders comments on litter, bins and recycling included:

- The need to maintain and expand the recycling facility at Braco
- The need to keep bins cleared at the Braco New Cemetery Car Park
- The good work the community do in organising litter picks.

Community and Landmanagers working together

Many thought that it was important to develop and maintain good relationships and partnership working between the community and local farmers and estates. Not only to resolve any land use conflict but to develop partnership work to improve and enhance the local environment, and to look at ways of developing projects of community benefit (allotments, orchards, paths, planting) and even to consider joint working on renewables, flood prevention and restoration of wildlife habitats.

Main headlines

The importance of land use in the area

Appreciation of the countryside and existing paths, parks, gardens, woods and rivers

Recognition of the good work of Ardoch in Bloom

Desire for community allotments/orchards

Need to maintain and improve the existing paths network

Suggestions for new paths and a local paths group

Need to occasionally resolve land use conflict issues

Potential for landmanager/community partnership projects

9 HERITAGE

The village of Braco was established in 1815. The Braco Estate came into existence as far back as 1442. It was known then as Brecache from the Gaelic 'Spotted Field' i.e., 'a field partly cleared of bracken'.

Roman Heritage

The Roman Fort at Ardoch was built 2000 years ago and was connected by a line of watchtowers and fortlets across the Southern edge of Perthshire. It was one of the largest Roman stations in Britain but now grass covered ramparts and ditches are all that remains. Grinnan Hill is the site of one of the signalling stations.

The Roman Military Complex at Ardoch is designated as a Scheduled Monument. It is recognised as a monument of national importance.

Ardoch is one of the most important surviving monuments of the Roman period in Britain and has become an identifiable monument in the national consciousness, and as such has significant value as a field monument. The loss of this example would significantly affect our understanding of the Roman military presence in Scotland. It would also have far-reaching implications for our understanding of the use of forts and temporary camps within the Roman Empire. (Historic Environment Scotland)

Built environment and designations

Churches

- Ardoch Parish Church was opened in 1781
- Ardoch Free Church Tower (the site of the original United Free Church built in 1844)
- Tullibardine Chapel near Braco was founded in 1445 and remains unaltered.

Houses, Castles and Gardens

- Braco Castle (Category B listed building)
- Braco Castle Gardens (designated Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape – 19th century landscape garden).
- Feddal Castle, Ardoch House (both now demolished)

Other buildings/sites of historic interest

- Ardoch Old Bridge (Knaik Bridge)
- Braco Sawmill (Category B listed)
- Nether Braco Farmhouse (Category B listed)
- J.N. Forsyth Victoriana Shop, Braco (Category C listed)
- Little Ardoch, Front Street (Category, C listed)
- Wester Ardoch (former Manse) Category C listed.
- Greenloaning Railway Station and Station House (Category C)
- Greenloaning Church (Category C)
- Greenloaning Inn (Category C)
- The Roundel, burial mound (Scheduled Monument)

Other interesting historical connections mentioned include:

- The Braco Agricultural Show is over 200 years and one of the oldest in the country
- The founder of the English Football League William McGregor, was born in Braco in 1846.
- Greenloaning Station was one of 10 intermediate stops on the Scottish Central Railway, built in the 1840s to connect passengers and goods from central Scotland with Perth and Stirling
- The Greenloaning Burns Club was founded in 1889 and is one of the earliest Clubs to be affiliated into the Federation of Burns Club.

Stakeholder Information and ViewsMaking more of the local heritage

In general, many stakeholders thought more could be done to preserve, enhance and promote local heritage. This was thought to be particularly true of the Roman heritage.

It was recognised that other aspects of the local heritage, including the Churches, Railway, Military Roads, Agriculture, the local estates houses, Braco Castle Gardens, and early Industry (Mills), were all worth highlighting as part of a stronger approach to heritage interpretation and the celebration of Braco and Greenloaning's past.

At worst there was concern that some sites were deteriorating including the Roman Fort. There was concern expressed about the conditions of the roadside wall at the site and as mentioned the uncertainty about the paths across it and its general upkeep.

The curiosity of the English Football League being established by a native of Braco was also seen as something that could be highlighted – particularly to tourists from the South!

Main headlines

The national significance of the Roman Military Complex

The interesting range of other heritage and historical connections

The need to protect and enhance the Roman Heritage

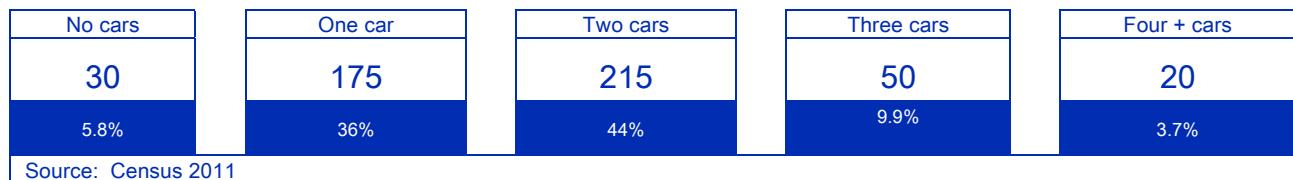
The opportunity to make more of local heritage – information, interpretation and education

To provide more opportunities for locals and visitors to learn more about local heritage – and for heritage assets to contribute to the visitor experience and local economy.

10. TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Car ownership

Residents are significantly more dependent on their cars than is the case for Perth and Kinross or Scotland as a whole.



- Only 5.8% of households had no car compared to 21% for Perth and Kinross and 13% Scotland
- 57.6% of households had 2 or more cars compared to 34.6% Perth and Kinross and 48% Scotland.

It was noted by some stakeholders that they would like to see more electric vehicle charging points and they noted that they were unable to have them where they lived – so some form of community initiative to address this would be good.

Public Transport

- Braco and Greenloaning is served by buses run by Stagecoach to Crieff and Perth and by Docherty's Midland Coaches to Stirling
- The Ember Bus stops in Greenloaning as part of its Dundee – Glasgow service.
- The nearest train stations are south at Dunblane and north-east at Gleneagles.

Stakeholders highlighted inadequacies with the existing system – ‘unreliable, stops too early and buses don’t meet with the trains.’ Recent disruptions to service were specifically mentioned.

As mentioned, the need for a community minibus was suggested – one that could provide a local service within the extended area – and also be available to connect to services and amenities in nearby villages and towns.

‘It would be good to have a service down Feddal Road to Kinbuck and Dunblane’

There was also a plea to lobby again for the opening of the Greenloaning Railway Station.

Roads and traffic

Road conditions

The condition of the roads was of concern for many - with the B8033 between Braco and Kinbuck and Carse View coming in for most criticism!

Concern was raised regarding dangers on the B8033 between Braco and Kinbuck with deterioration of drains, gullies, passing places, narrow road, bends and with many road

users. There was further concern that these problems could be exacerbated by increased traffic in the future if e.g., there was an expansion of the substation and any additional work to increase the capacity of the Beauly - Denny Powerline. It was however suggested that the extra demands on it might also be the basis for an argument to have it upgraded.

Traffic - Speeding and Calming

It was suggested that there should be a 20mph speed limit throughout the built-up areas.

Specific mention was made of:

- positive recent developments were also mentioned with the VAS systems and speed cushions being installed at Greenloaning with another VAS also proposed.
- needing more speeding restrictions on Front Street
- Need for more traffic calming before the Knaik Bridge as it was a recognised danger spot for speeding traffic
- reducing the speed along Feddal Road in recognition of road conditions, school, housing, its use as a cycle route.
- An increase of heavy lorries often related to Forestry Haulage using the B8033

Safer for pedestrians and cyclists

Stakeholders mentioned:

- The need for better pedestrian access between Greenloaning and Braco – either through improved lighting along the existing pavement – or ideally with a new off-road path.
- The desire to see the pavement extended along Feddal Road to Keir Burn Picnic area.
- Making Feddal Road more cycle friendly

'Pavement too narrow cars move too fast need footpath (Braco – Greenloaning')

Parking

There was thought to be a need for improved and more obvious car parking – particularly to serve the community facilities on Feddal Road – church, school, village hall – and Lodge Park. It was hoped that one solution might be to create new car parking as part of the development of the new school.

Strategic Issues

High dependency on car ownership

Improvements in public transport were wanted

Desire to see the train station opened again

Opportunity for community transport to fill gaps in public services

Concerns about road conditions and speeding traffic and number of heavy vehicles

Need for ongoing traffic calming

Hope that there could be improvements in the B8033 and to make it more cycle friendly

Request for improved pedestrian access between Braco and Greenloaning and from Braco Village to Keir Burn Picnic Area

Need and potential opportunities for improved parking in Braco

11. UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Renewable Energy - Windfarms

There are several renewable energy schemes in the area – and more proposed in the wider surrounding area:

- Current schemes – Braes of Doune, and Burnfoot, Burnfoot North and Rhodders provide community benefit funds to Braco and Greenloaning.
- Extensions to Burnfoot and Rhodders and the new Strathallan Wind Farm at Greenscares are likely to increase available community benefit funds in the area.

Strathallan Windfarm and Green Hydrogen.

The construction phase for this project is now underway. It is understood that Phase 1 of the windfarm will consist of up to 9 wind turbines developed over two phases which will eventually provide a total generation capacity of over 20MW. Proposals also include plans for a green hydrogen production facility.

Increasing Grid Capacity

The Beauly to Denny Powerlines run through the area and are thought likely to be developed in the future to provide increased capacity. This may involve the development of another substation near to the existing Braco East substation.

Battery Storage

There are also proposals for Battery Storage facilities in the area near the existing substation.

Community Benefit

The community have benefited greatly from judicious use of community benefit funds from renewables and the funds are likely to increase in the future in light of the noted developments.

It was also suggested that development of a new substation and battery storage facilities off the by B8033 could be in some part be offset by support from those involved (SSSE and developers) to improve the road.

Other renewable projects

It was noted that landowners had previously explored or been contacted about other renewable energy schemes e.g., micro hydro and solar. It was suggested that there might be scope for the community to work more closely with landmanagers to develop renewable schemes that would be of mutual benefit.

Sewage Systems

Braco and Greenloaning sewage system is at capacity, and this is a current limiting factor for any additional housing development. Those that were in favour of expanding the

community over the next 10 years were keen to see the capacity increased to enable housing and population growth. This was said in the context of needing to maintain (and grow) local services and amenities.

Mains Gas

Braco and Greenloaning have no access to mains gas. This will often mean a higher cost of energy per household. Stakeholders noted that the community had previously run a 'Power Down Scheme' which had reached out to all households, helped residents identify energy use/loss, and access support for insulation schemes and more efficient energy systems.

Broadband/ICT

Broadband connectivity was noted by some as fine and others as not meeting their needs. This situation might merit further investigation.

Strategic Issues

Growth in Windfarms

Possible strengthening of existing transmission network

Opportunities for Battery Storage

Potential for increased community benefits

Potential role for the community in supporting/working with landowners on renewable projects that would be of mutual benefit.

Trying to develop infrastructure for the future that would help reduce carbon footprint.